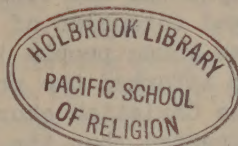


# Japan Christian Activity News

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## NCC-JAPAN CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETS

Resignations, overseas affairs, and *Burakumin* problems highlighted the Sept. 22 semiannual meeting of the Central Committee of the National Christian Council of Japan. Following reports of various activities of the NCCJ the committee accepted the resignation of John M. NAKAJIMA from the post of general secretary of the NCCJ. He is to become the general secretary of the Kyodan (United Church of Christ in Japan) early next year with the actual date to be decided after negotiations between officers of the Kyodan and the NCCJ. His successor is to be chosen by a search committee composed of officials of major Christian denominations and organizations. So far, the committee has compiled a list of about 30 potential candidates, but has not contacted any as to their willingness to be nominated.

The committee approved a treasurer's report on the settlement of accounts for fiscal year 1976, totalling ¥50 million (approximately US\$189,000, at US\$1=Yen 265). By departments, the budget breakdown came to ¥13 million for the Division of Christian Literature, ¥784,000 for the Division of Mission and Service, (part of which was used to raise ¥6 million in its campaign to combat hunger in Asia--one of several projects), ¥13.6 million for the Division of Education, and ¥22.5 million for the NCCJ headquarters. Of the latter figure, most of the funds were earmarked for specific projects, with only ¥5 million budgeted and spent on operating expenses. Concurrently, the year-end figures for the NCC Center for the Study of Japanese Religions--¥10.9 million--were presented.

The East German Churches relations committee of the NCCJ reported that its first project will be an exchange of delegates. The Central Committee approved the sending of a delegation of five, representing Japanese churches and the NCCJ, to the Federation of Evangelical Churches in East Germany, with the trip slated for February 1978.

One of two major resolutions passed at the last NCCJ General Assembly, in March 1976, called for NCCJ to take serious steps toward the elimination of discrimination against *Buraku* peoples, Japan's centuries-old outcaste class. However, the responsible committee so far has poorly functioned because no one has been appointed--or accepted appointment--to the post of committee chairman. The resultant lack of committee action has produced a great deal of frustration among *Buraku* communities especially in the Kansai region. Four representatives from the Christian Council for Action for *Buraku* came to the Central Committee meeting to lobby for full operation of the *Buraku* problem committee.

The meeting closed with passage of two resolutions supporting the actions of Christians elsewhere in Asia. In connection with a cable and letter previously sent from General Secretary Nakajima to Thai Prime Minister THANIN Kraivixien

MORE

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the Central Committee endorsed the following resolution:

"Rev. KOSON Srisang, General Secretary of the Church of Christ in Thailand, together with other religionists, has established a Coordinating Group for Religion for Society, and has been providing good leadership in working for the protection of human rights in Thailand. Especially on Aug. 31st, he publicized an open letter to Prime Minister Kraivixien in which he asked for a fair trial for those young people who had been prosecuted on the Oct. 6 incident. The letter commended the alleged intention of the prime minister, as reported in a newspaper story, to have these young people judged by a fair trial which could meet international standards; informed the prime minister that many humanitarian organizations, including the Christian churches in the world, were deeply concerned about this trial; and requested that the trial be held not in a military court but in a civil court, with fair legal representation for the defendants.

"The fourth meeting of the Central Committee of the NCCJ is convinced that this action of Dr. Koson is based upon his faith in the Christian Gospel, and supports him and the Church of Christ in Thailand wholeheartedly."

A second resolution commented on the issuance of "A Declaration on Human Rights" by the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan on Aug. 16, saying in part:

"Based on the confession that Jesus Christ is Lord of all mankind and on the conviction that human rights and a land are gifts bestowed by God, (the declaration) declared that the future of Taiwan must be determined by the 17 million inhabitants of Taiwan.

"The (NCCJ Central Committee) supports this declaration pleading for the principle of self-determination by the people, supports also the mission and action of the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan which stands on the rock of evangelical faith amidst tempest, and prays fervently for this church."

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*Where are the facts?*

TEXTBOOK CONTROL  
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by KIMURA Tomomi

*(Rev. Kimura Tomomi is a Member of the Board of Managers, Division of Education of NCCJ and also serves as pastor at Gyon'inzaka church--Eds.)*

At a recent meeting the Division of Education of the National Christian Council of Japan discussed a problem related to public school textbooks.

Until the end of World War II all school textbooks were edited by the Ministry of Education resulting in the imperial fascist system influencing public education. During that period Japanese history was not written objectively. The mythological stories of the Imperial family, for example, were presented as if they were factual history. Further, only those individuals who were particularly loyal to the Emperor were glorified. The result was an extreme distortion between historical fact and historical interpretation.

After the war the absolutist state operating under the Emperor system collapsed and a democratic constitution was established. In the field of public education, school textbooks prepared by publishing companies were reviewed by the Ministry of Education, and made available for teachers to choose those texts which they wanted to use.

However, several years ago a reaction movement toward the pre-war situation in the editing of textbooks was begun. This was accomplished through an undemocratic use of the review process by refusing to accept textbooks written by writers who made a distinction between historical fact and historical interpretation.

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Despite the fact that this change in the review process was challenged in court, the conservative Ministry of Education seems to be erasing the distinction between historical fact and historical interpretation.

A concrete example is found in the case of the fifth grade social studies textbook where the word *chukonhi* (a stone memorial to the war dead which emphasizes the fact that those who died did so because of loyalty to the Emperor) was to be used. The writer in question planned to use actual events to illustrate what lay behind the erection of the monuments. He mentioned the deaths of old people and others killed because of their participation in war. However a Ministry of Education official called the person responsible for the preparation of that particular textbook into a separate room, told him to remove criticism of the war, and instructed him to glorify those who died for the Emperor. These textbooks, from which the distinction between fact and interpretation was removed, went into use in the fifth grade classrooms last April.

Because of anxiety that this type of control is likely to become more frequent, the NCCJ Division of Education recently discussed the necessity of setting up a committee to be concerned with freedom of thought and to cooperate with P.T.A. members, parents, and teachers to prevent the erasing of the distinction between fact and historical interpretation in school textbooks.

-translated by  
John REAGAN

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*Japan-Korea youth work camp*  
A BLIND PERSON VIEWS KOREA  
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This was the second year for the Japan-Korea Youth Work Camp held in Piamri, Korea from July 17-27. Japanese participants included six young men, five young women and two church leaders from the northern Tokyo district of the United Church of Christ. These people joined 25 Korean youth in Seoul for construction work and camping. The women lived in a church while the men were divided into small groups and stayed in homes nearby.

WATANABE Toshie, 23, a blind woman, was a member of the Japanese team. In the following she talks about her unique experience in Korea with great joy.

"During the orientation before visiting Korea, I was afraid because I could not read any of the books regarding Korea. I was quite ignorant of Korean history and people, because no braille books were available.

"I participated in the program as much as I could with such things as the two kilometer run at six every morning. I worked with others carrying stones and pipes with which to build a well and water drainage. During the discussion periods Korean friends indicated openly that they do not like the Japanese. Also they were interested in what the Japanese think about North Korea. As a group we were involved in a drama under a Korean leader. It was a story of how Communists could oppress Christians. We were taken to see a 3,500-meter underground tunnel at the 38th parallel. On the way to the tunnel I could feel the peaceful countryside of deep green trees and the curved road like in a painted picture. But when I felt the heat from the military trucks' engines, the vision of peaceful Korea suddenly vanished.

"My impression of the Koreans is one of a very musical people. When the people came together they automatically created such beautiful harmonies which I never experienced among the Japanese. In my free time I had a chance to visit two blind women's settlements where I talked about the situation relative to the blind in Japan and I challenged the Korean blind women to go out bravely into

(....more)



the world.

"We were welcomed wherever we went. I feel prejudices toward the blind must be everywhere in Korea, but since we were on a scheduled plan we did not have real contact with ordinary people's lives.

"I have worked as a masseuse at hot spring hotels in the sightseeing areas of Japan. In these situations, blind women are preferred over blind men. The ratio in Japan is for every 3 requests for women there are 2 requests for men while in Korea the situation is drastically different with 10 for women against one for men. The masseuse does not have full status as a profession.

"There are differences in the conditions that the blind face in Tokyo as opposed to those in the regional communities in Japan. A few blind people enter colleges, but textbooks and other resources are not available in braille. The blind in Tokyo have realized that volunteer braille writers are not quite dependable so that they have requested that braille books be provided through public funds. In the regional communities in Japan the blind have to live off the charity of others. Such differences were seen in Korea also.

"I think that the problems of the blind should be considered in a political context. With Japan having such pride in its economic growth there is much to be ashamed of relative to the many areas where society has failed to provide for its own social needs. I dream of a society where the strong and weak live harmoniously through mutual help. Such is a truly beautiful society."

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*Looking from within*  
RISSHO KOSEI KAI SEMINAR  
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Cherie CRUZ

A live-in seminar on Rissho Kosei Kai, sponsored by the NCC Center for the Study of Japanese Religions last September 22-24, drew 16 missionaries from different Protestant denominations and Catholics.

The seminar was held within the Tokyo central buildings of Rissho Kosei Kai, a layman's organization rooted in Buddhist doctrine. Formal lectures on history, doctrine, and activities, observation of morning worship, observation of *hōza* (group counselling sessions) and discussions comprised the formal seminar schedule. But living within the very quarters of Rissho Kosei Kai--which meant sleeping, bathing, eating, walking in the dormitory hallways with the believers of this faith--made this seminar a better way to really reach understanding of another faith. There were thousands of people in the dormitories, who later participated in the prayer sessions in the "Great Sacred Hall," chanting excerpts from the Lotus Sutra, rolling their prayer beads. Needless to say, the buildings were mammoth. Most people had come from outside Tokyo pilgrimaging to this place where Rissho Kosei Kai was first founded, in celebration of the autumnal equinox.

*Hōza* is        Rissho Kosei Kai has a membership of more than 1.5 million house-  
Pulse-beat    holds. It has seen a rapid growth in the last 20 years since it  
                 start, and is still rapidly increasing today. What is attributed  
to be the pulse-beat of Rissho Kosei Kai is the *hōza* or group counselling sessions.  
These sessions take about two hours and are composed of groups of 15 or more.  
Members tell their personal problems to the group and group leader. The problems  
are usually of everyday life matters, such as sickness, money problems, problems  
with husband or children. The leader then counsels the member according to the  
teachings of the Lotus Sutra or from President NIWANO Nikkyo's writings. (Presi-  
dent Niwano is one of the co-founders of this organization.) The lay leader  
speaks with authority and the member counseled often accepts what is said with-  
out question, and tries to apply what he/she has learned to        daily life. In

(....more)



one case a younger woman leader counseled an older man and the man accepted her words in all humility. And yet the leader does not entirely dominate. There are times when other members also give their opinion or share if they have had similar experiences. The *hōza* was greatly admired by participants as a form of reaching down to the everyday lives of a greater majority of people.

At the end of the seminar, a discussion held among the participants on "what have we learned" brought several searching questions especially as Christian churches, pastors, could not help but be contrasted to this layman's organization. Participants discussed what could be done to encourage lay participation in the churches. One commented that only the *Fujin-Iinkai* (women's groups) were the really active layperson group in Christian churches. Another commented that Japanese pastors, because they have a low position in status-conscious Japan, tend to be insecure and easily feel threatened about their positions. Many often want to do all the work themselves. As a result, they overwork themselves, to the detriment of the quality of the work done and to the quantitative growth of his church. In search of a more active church, one missionary said that perhaps all foreign missionaries should leave and just trust that a Japanese leader will arise and bring about a regeneration of the Christian church.

Mostly, The puzzling question often asked was on the tremendous economic donations growth of Rishso Kosei Kai. The answer given was, aside from a low membership fee, they also get support in kind, e.g. a group would contribute manual labor, another would contribute intellectual talent, etc. But most of all, on occasions, when they feel especially happy or grateful for a problem solved or a prayer granted, they spontaneously give donations, and the donations can be very big.

As to the future growth of Rishso Kosei Kai, there are ongoing house visits by the members. When one person of the family joins, the whole household is "guided" to become members. There is also formal educational training on religious doctrine through seminars, and in a seminary of sorts where youth are trained to start new groups, though they are not to become entrenched leaders. Rishso Kosei Kai expansion concentrates only within Japan and to Japanese living abroad. Rishso Kosei Kai hopes that all men of different faiths will be able to reach understanding and work in harmony towards the realization of world peace.

Among the many activities of Rishso Kosei Kai for the betterment of society, international understanding and other humanitarian projects, it is the biggest supporter of the movement of the World Conference on Religion and Peace. They offer aid to refugees, promote the WCRP conferences, and the WCRP office is in one of Rishso Kosei Kai's buildings.

All participants went home feeling that the experience of a really close impression of the faith was a meaningful learning experience and served to establish inter-faith friendship.

*Comparing the creeds of Rishso Kosei Kai and the Christian churches, the participants commended the former for stressing action in daily life.*

#### Creed of Rishso Kosei Kai Members

"We, the members of Rishso Kosei Kai, under the leadership of our revered teacher, President Niwano, recognize the essential way of salvation in Buddhism and pledge our best efforts, in the spirit of Buddhist laymen, to perfect our character and realize in our lives the Bodhisattva Way. To this end, by improving in knowledge and practice of faith, in personal discipline and in leading others, we will endeavor to realize a state of peace for the family, the community, the country and the world."



"A step...for the small, weak"

ECUMENICAL WOMEN'S MEET

A nurse-superintendent of the Kinugasa Home for the aged, a Catholic sister who works with the Inochi-no Denwa (Life Line) and a former judge of the family and juvenile court were the speakers of the Ecumenical Women's gathering at the Gyosei Gakuen, Tokyo on Sept. 28. The meeting had been prepared by Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox church women and was attended by about 200 participants.

Mrs. ISSHIKI Yoshiko, chairperson of NCCJ women's committee, stated in her greetings that this was a step for the common concern of the Christian women in Japan for the human rights of the small and the weak.

Ms. TAKAHASHI Kazuko and Sister HAYASHI Yoshiko told of their experiences in their daily works with both the aged and people with various problems. Mr. MORITA Soichi talked about the issue of juvenile delinquents and broken families through the many cases he has dealt with and questioned the audience, "Who is the invisible person in today's society?" He said that sometimes Christians who wish to be volunteers do not see the real person behind the issue. And abandoned people do not seek sympathy alone.

**LAST CALL!**

An NCCJ-sponsored Study Tour to the Holy Land, the Vatican, Geneva (WCC), and Paris leaves Tokyo Nov. 6, returning Nov. 21. The Study Tour will be led by NCCJ Chairman John YAMADA and Rev. II Kiyoshi of the Reinanzaka Church, an authority on the Holy Land who has been there four times.

Cost: ¥519,000 (includes tickets, hotels, meals, tour guides, etc.)

Application deadline: Oct. 6, 1977 to NCCJ.

"We're goin' fishing," the boys shouted early one morning. I was uneasy because there is no place to fish in our neighborhood. They came back a little later with their pockets full of coke-bottle caps. They collected the caps from vending machines with a magnet on a long string.

Their fishing was not just for amusement. They were in the money-making business collecting certain marks printed inside the caps. My heart was chilled. Am I so naive as to wish that children would play outdoors as we once did when in fact they are wandering around the streets looking for vending machines and hunting the special caps to exchange for money.

Who is going to be responsible for the children who find their playground in the jungles of automatic machines and electronic game centers?

Translation from the Kyodan Shimpō,  
Sept. 3, 1977

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NEWS FLASH! The Confederate Air Force decided Sept. 28 to exclude the A-bomb reenactment from its upcoming airshow, after a meeting with congressional leaders and officials of the State and Defense departments, who told the CAF the show "could upset the balance of any ongoing or further negotiations with some of our allies."--from AP